

Jesus even by night. It was not curiosity which brought him, but a conviction and earnest desire to know the truth. He was running a terrible risk, he a chief man of the Jews seeking knowledge of this unlearned and strangely zealous stranger from Galilee. But he came, and with a confession of what he did know. "Rabbi," or teacher, he said, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." We know not what else you may be, but we are sure that you are at least a teacher and that God has sent you, for your miracles attest God's presence.

Jesus with directness, going at once to the root of the matter, declared unto him a doctrine of the kingdom of God, which if he would believe, should set him forever at rest, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born anew (or 'from above'), he cannot see the kingdom of God." As much as to say, "Nicodemus, I read the question in your heart. You have been made to think by my strange show of authority in the temple and by my miracles. You are wondering if, after all, your being a Jew and Pharisee, does not make you a member of the kingdom of God. You have begun to distrust your descent from Abraham to save you. And well you may. For unless a man be born from above, from God, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Neither the fact that you are a Jew, and a Pharisee, not that you are a learned man and a moral man and have good impulses will admit you to that kingdom for which every Jew looks, tho it will be different from what he thinks, and which the Messiah will declare and establish. You must be born again."

This perplexes Nicodemus the Pharisee and scholar. So to find out the meaning of Jesus, he asks, "How can a man be born when he is old. It is an impossibility." Then Jesus opened up to him a little more of the great mystery. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," is Christ's reply varying his former words to make them plainer. And he continued, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. I do not refer to that. You were thus born once. And thereby you became a Jew. But that does not make you a member of the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit of God is man's spirit. You who have been depending on your fleshly birth as a Jew to entitle you to a place in God's kingdom, have never as an immortal spirit been born from above, or anew. This is necessary. Marvel not that I told you, men must be born anew. Seek not to understand it. It is like so many things in nature, not able to be understood by the mind of man. Even the wind blowing up this street tonight you cannot understand. You can hear its sound, but you cannot tell whence it comes or whither it goes. Even thus is every one that is born of the spirit. You cannot understand the *how* of it. But it is so, even

as you know that the wind goes somewhere from somewhere." The wise Pharisee, now thoroughly puzzled, just beginning to think on a new and strange topic and one which is of the deepest interest to himself exclaims, "How can these things be!" He had never seen such a thing, how could it be.

But Jesus leads him on. "Art thou a teacher in Israel and ignorant of these profound truths? If so, it but shows the bad state in which religion has fallen in this nation.

But, I the unlettered carpenter of Nazareth can tell you of a truth that these things are so, because I have seen these very things occur." And how often we make the mistake of thinking that human learning is better than religious experience! "But," continued the Master seeing the doubt of Nicodemus, "I have been telling you simply of the part of this great subject that belongs to the here and now with which you should be familiar. What shall you say if I shall tell you of some of the real mysteries of the kingdom? For example, what do you think of this, 'No man has ever ascended into heaven, but he which descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.' Or what if I shall tell you another of the mysteries of this kingdom, that, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.' How shall you believe that, if you cannot believe the simple matter of the birth from above? Yet these are profound truths which you shall yet understand and joyfully believe." Thus with splendid tact, with sober honesty and candor did Jesus deal with an inquiring soul. And how eternally true, and blessedly simple are his grand words. Words, over which unbelief stumbles. But on which faith leans with the confidence of absolute assurance. Words not to be understood by the intellect unaided by the heart, but to be known by that practical obedience to them, which Jesus declared was the means of spiritual understanding. John 7:17.

And the author of this gospel adds those words which are an epitome of the glad tidings, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." And then he continues that God's purpose in sending Christ was not to judge the world, but to save it. However, each one passes judgment on himself by his attitude to Christ. He who believes on him has passed out of death into life and shall not come into judgment. But he who has refused to believe on Jesus has been judged already because he has rejected the best effort of divine love and is sinning against light and knowledge. Thus we lose sight of Nicodemus, the man who wanted to wait and investigate. But the after events in Jesus' life show the spirit of the man. In the hour when all had forsaken him Nicodemus is one of the two of the Sanhedrists who care for Christ's body and see that it is decently

buried. He had found out that Jesus spoke true and he dared to confess him. But, how many terrible hours of agony and suspense he might have been saved and how much he might have helped had he been obedient to all he knew of Christ from the first!

Applications

- 1 Jesus is the same to high and low, to rich and poor.
- 2 Men need first and foremost regeneration, not patching up of the old nature.
- 3 Christ does not separate baptism in water and baptism in the spirit. Both are necessary to entrance into God's kingdom.
- 4 Christ reveals to us only the things we are willing to obey.
- 5 Men still want to know how before they believe. The reverse is the divine order in nature and grace.
- 6 Christ came to save men not to judge. But a time is coming when he will come to judge. Are you ready for it?
- 7 Christ must be lifted up. Are you lifting him?

Church News

Waterloo, Iowa

I shall not try to report for the Enon church this time because there is a regular correspondent who will send in a report for the church soon.

Hitherto there has been no special report from Waterloo, but as our brethren, about 45 of whom live in town have become tired of doing nothing for the cause they profess to love except what they can do in the church at Enon four miles from town, they decided at a business meeting held in connection with our weekly prayer meeting in town "to make an effort to raise enough money to build a church in Waterloo." The committee is at work, and we believe from present appearances next summer will see a Brethren church in Waterloo. It is the thing they have long needed. Many would have joined with us had we had an organization and a house there, who did not, because they wanted a church house where they could do active work for Christ and the church.

Now we are making the effort. Of course there are some, as always, who want some time to consider the matter yet, and some who think we are not able yet, tho we shall grow no abler either in purse or desire, and some who care more for their money than for their cause, more for selfish display, than for the cause of the Gospel alone and the salvation of souls. However, we are thankful that these last are so few. We need to realize that for us here it is the effort of a life time and should sacrifice accordingly. But, I'm glad to testify that most of our people know how to sacrifice for Christ's sake and have done it and will continue to do so. When I say that over half of the money raised in this church every year goes to people outside our borders, it becomes evident that